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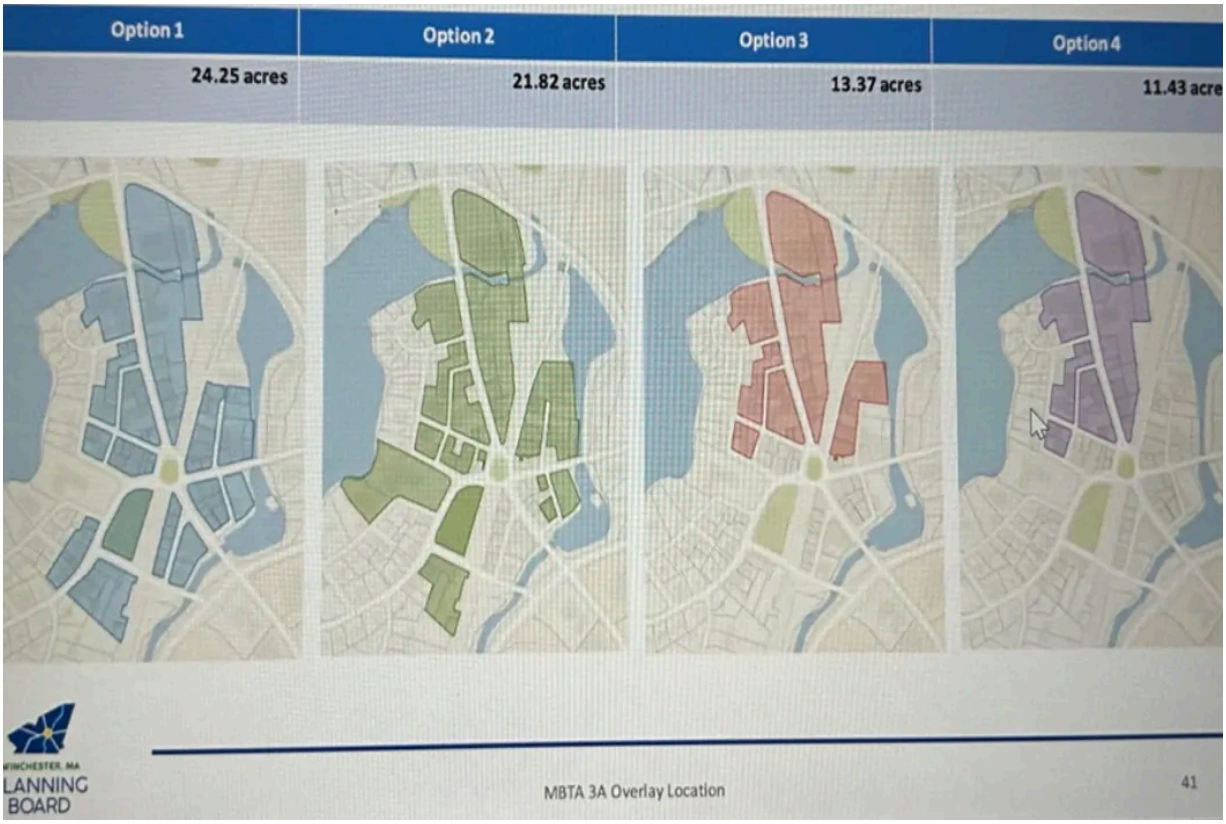
NEWS

Planning Board votes to finalize MBTA zoning law districts

TARA HUGHES | STAFF WRITER

January 17, 2024 . 5:33 PM — 3 min read



The Winchester Planning Board on Jan. 16 finalized the districts that make up the land area required to comply with the MBTA Communities Zoning Law. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO

The Planning Board on Tuesday night voted to finalize which dist
make up the minimum required land area to comply with the MB

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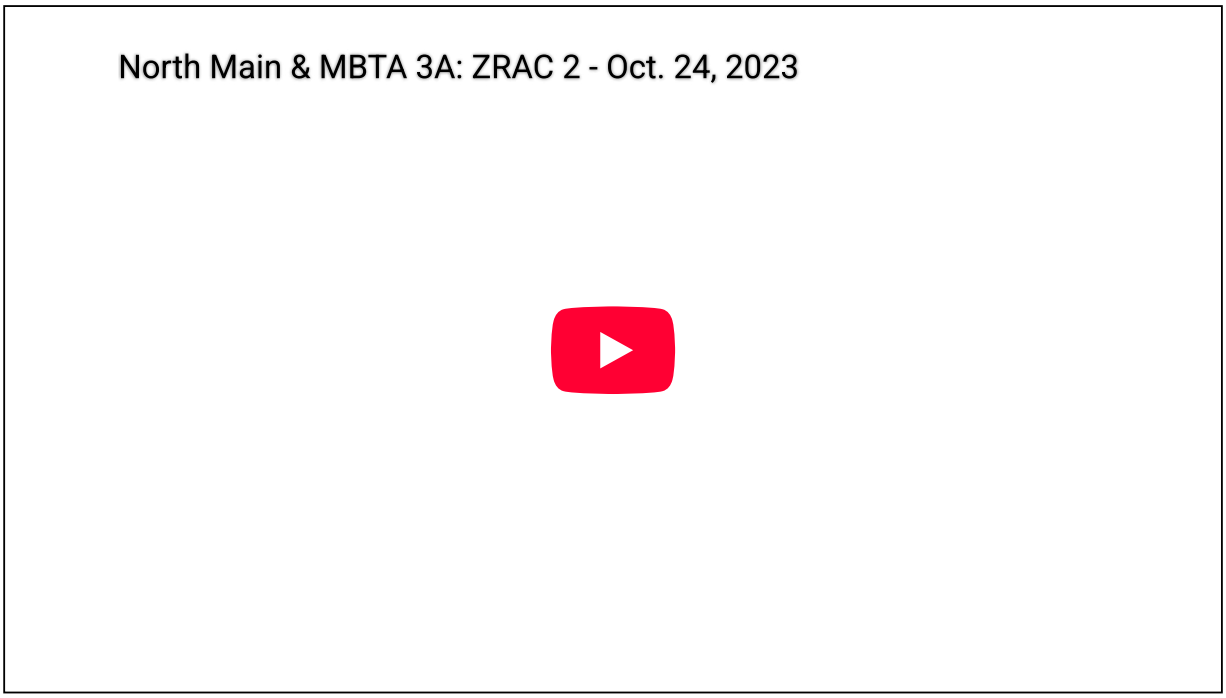
Communities Zoning Law, which was enacted in 2021 to remove barriers to development along the transportation network in order to address the state's housing crisis.

According to Mass.gov, "because some local zoning laws sought to limit or prevent the construction of multifamily housing near MBTA stations, the statute explicitly responds by requiring MBTA Communities to have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multifamily housing is allowed 'as of right.' This district must generally be located within half a mile of a transit station and allow for development at a minimum gross density of fifteen units per acre. The law also prevents restrictions within the designated district that would interfere with the construction of housing suitable for families with children."

In Winchester, the minimum required land area is 37 acres and 50% of that land area must be within 1/2 mile radius of the town center train station.



The eight district options presented were the Central Business District (CBD), General Business District 2 (GBD 2), General Business Dist

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(GBD 3), Ginn Road, Parkview, North Wedge Pond, St. Mary's and Mahoney's/Bonnell.

At its Jan. 9 meeting, the Planning Board voted to include the Parkview and North Wedge Pond districts (the board re-voted the North Wedge Pond district on Tuesday to correct an area miscalculation) and denied inclusion of the Mahoney's/Bonnell district.

The remaining districts to be considered on Tuesday night were the CBD, GBD 2, GBD 3, Ginn Road and St. Mary's. The CBD was determined to be a primary location for the overlay due to its prior zoning to encourage mixed-use development and its proximity to transit. The maximum land area in the CBD that the Planning Board considered was 24.25 acres and the minimum land area was 11.43 acres.

The final overlay included 14.42 acres of the CBD (all within the 1/2 mile of transit). The board voted to include all of the purple area (north core) from option 4. In addition, the board voted to add the gray areas, which were referred to as the Park, Vine, Elm extension and the Shore, Conv
Vernon addition.

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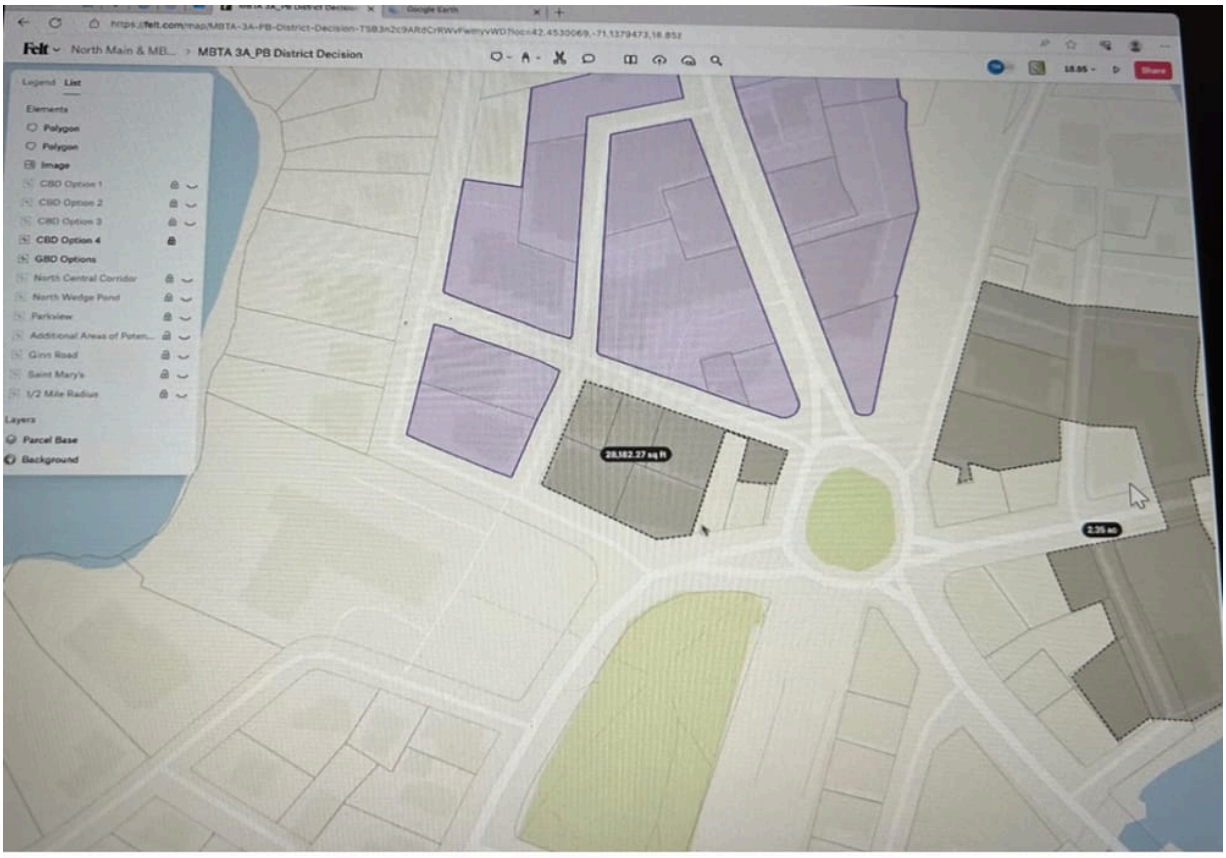

The board also voted to include the green, red and orange sections (of the GBD 2), which comprised 12.41 acres, with 7.5 within the 1/2 mile of transit.

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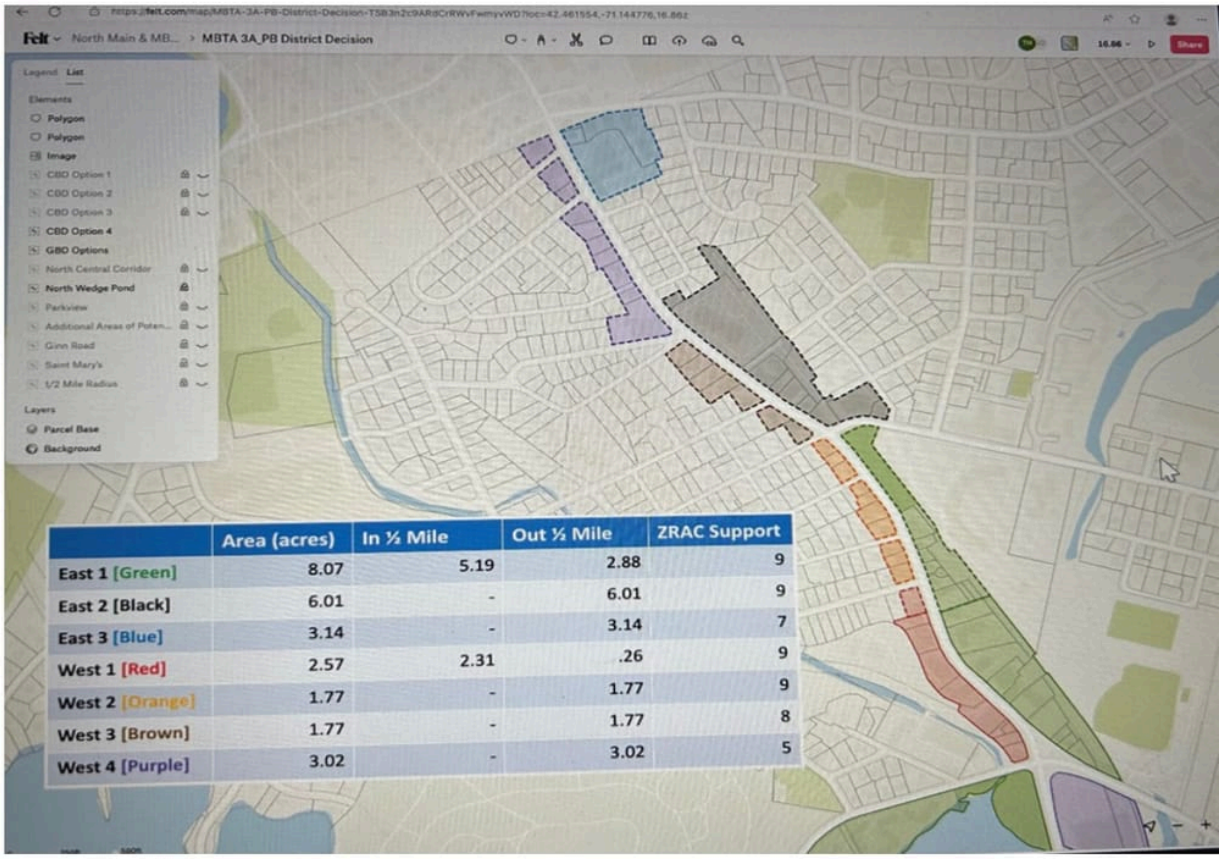

	Area (acres)	In ½ Mile	Out ½ Mile	ZRAC Support
East 1 [Green]	8.07	5.19	2.88	9
East 2 [Black]	6.01	-	6.01	9
East 3 [Blue]	3.14	-	3.14	7
West 1 [Red]	2.57	2.31	.26	9
West 2 [Orange]	1.77	-	1.77	9
West 3 [Brown]	1.77	-	1.77	8
West 4 [Purple]	3.02	-	3.02	5

In addition, the North Wedge Pond district provided 7.7 acres with all acreage being within the 1/2 mile and the Parkview district provided 8.7 acres with all acreage falling outside the ½ mile. The total land area established was 42.23 with 29.62 within the 1/2 mile of transit.

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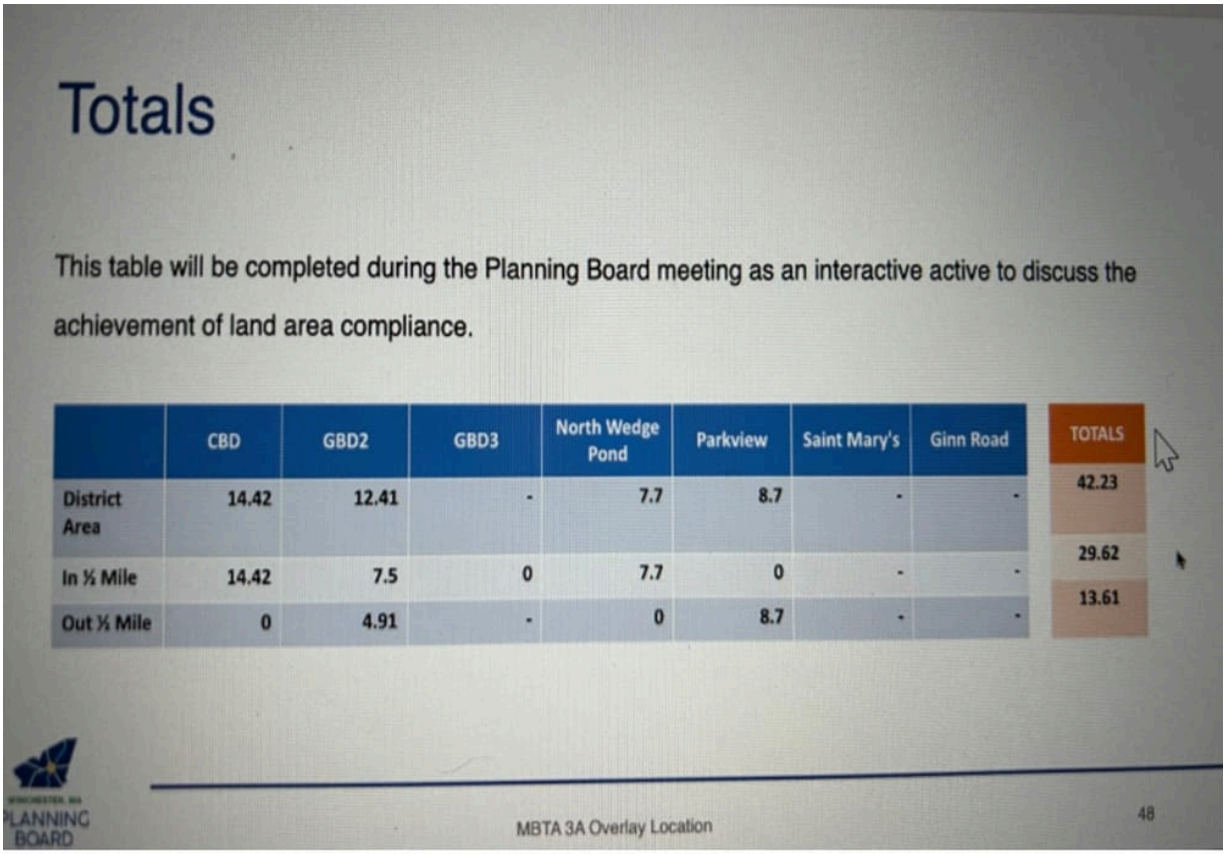

Because it had already met the requirements of 3A, the board decided it didn't need the GBD 3 (no vote) and then voted to exclude both the St. Mary's district and the Ginn Road district.

The Planning Board will hold a public meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 24 in person at Town Hall in the Winchester Room at 7 p.m. to present the details on each selected district and to discuss the potential development standards.

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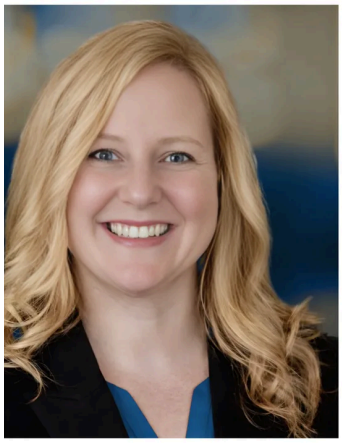

NEWS

Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

Two candidates for Winchester's School Committee will face voters at a forum as the district navigates a new literacy curriculum, budget pressures and questions about student mental health. Heather von Mering and John Bellaire are competing for an open seat on the School Committee, which oversees a budget von

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses

NEWS

Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for rente

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis

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as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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EVENTS

Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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FEATURES

‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

SPECIAL TO THE NEWS
March 4, 2026

EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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